

A Heart To Heart Talk

January 7, 2007

Shabbat/Sabbaths and Spiritual Disciplines

New Year's Resolutions

Proverbs 25:28

Spiritual Disciplines

"Making yourself do what you may not want to do because you know it is good for you."

"**The unexamined life** is not worth living." – Socrates

* "Let him that would move the world first move himself."

* "Contentment is natural wealth, luxury is artificial poverty."

What Is Discipline: Discipline Heroes

Jeff Norris – reading, study, routines

Joe Barth – first Friday, inventory day,

Kevin Snyder – memorization, days of year, 01-07 (2 Tim. 1:7)

Disciplines

1. Daily Devotions
2. Writing – journaling, articulating
3. Study – research, in depth
4. Reading – Bible and Great Books
5. Tithing – and giving
6. Fasting(s) – self denial
7. Disciplined Private Prayer
8. Prayer Partner/Accountability
9. Private Worship
10. Sabbath Rests, Retreats
11. Spiritual Inventory
12. Remembering
13. Memorization
14. Mentoring
15. Feasts of the Lord
16. Modesty – covering nakedness, my won't do's
17. Absolutes/Boundaries
18. Spiritual Pilgrimages
19. Missions Journeys
20. Bearing/Sharing Other's Burdens

Shabbat/Sabbaths and *Spiritual Disciplines*

Genesis 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Genesis 4:26 And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

Exodus 23:14 Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.

Exodus 23:17 Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover); "No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

Feast of Harvest (First Fruits, Pentecost),

Feast of Ingathering (Feast of Tabernacles) at the end of the year,

"Three times a year all the men are to appear before the Sovereign LORD.

Leviticus 23:15

3 "There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD.

15 "From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. 16 Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD.

Isaiah 58:13-14 If you turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words: then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." The mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Mark 2:27-28

Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Colossians 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

Why Take A Pastoral Sabbatical?

1. Guidelines for Ministers – attrition rates, burn-out, recycling
2. Purposeful Pauses – Mid-Course Corrections – refocus, reflect, relax, restore
3. Prayer, Reading, Study, and Journaling
4. Writing – leaving behind footprints, a spiritual legacy

“If I wait ‘til retirement I won’t remember what I had to say.”

A Study Sabbatical

A Time to Seek The Lord

The LORD said to Moses on Mount Sinai, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD. - Leviticus 25:1-5

Over the next few weeks I, Pastor Dick, will be on a 24 day Sabbatical for the purpose of spending saturated time alone with God and completing some writing projects.

A Sabbath, or *Shabbat*, means to rest, to cease from doing the usual things to do something else. Its intent is to deepen relationship with and appreciation for God. God ordered it in the Old Testament law and it applied to all people in Israel, even to the animals and land itself.

What a Privilege and Honor!

Our denomination recommends that every church consider the possibility of giving their pastor a sabbatical after every seven years of ministry. Your elders and church governing board have graciously agreed to grant me a sabbatical in two parts, a total of seven weeks, or 49 days, divided between this year and next. So, the Lord willing, this January 2007, I will spend from January 8 to January 31 (24 days) isolated from noise and administrative duties, in a condo loaned to us by friends, writing, reading, and praying. I will be back in the office on February 1.

In Touch

It is a wonderful privilege and opportunity for me. I treasure it. I also want you to share in it. So, I am creating this page on our web site to share periodical updates of what is happening and how the writing is going. You can check back here a couple of times each week and see what is new. Although I will be out of touch with the burdens of ministry I do not want you to be out of touch with me. Please feel free to send me encouragement notes, prayers you are lifting up, Scripture verses, humorous anecdotes, cartoons, and things that are not "heavy" or work oriented. I probably will not respond or I will be spending most of the time writing e-mails. But do keep in touch.

Prayer

During this time I will be spending much time in prayer. I will be revisiting spiritual disciplines, praying about the church and our vision, and plans the Lord may have in store for us. I will be praying for you too. Please feel free to send me brief "personal" prayer requests. It is a special time when you may contact me personally to tell me your how I can pray for you. Keep it brief. Keep it personal, not ministry related.

Online Updates

As the Lord grants me time and freedom to do so I may post some photos, give you an update on the writing process, ask you to pray if I get writer's block, or send out a general e-mail to the congregation to let you know how I am surviving.

Where?

Marilyn will be with me, but we will travel in two cars so she can visit with our grown children and grandchildren as well as friends in the New Jersey/Philadelphia area. By the way, we are not vacationing in Hawaii. We will be on near the Atlantic Ocean in Ocean City, N.J. Friends will be providing us their lovely three bedroom condo just a couple of blocks from the beach and boardwalk. So, if this weather continues we might even enjoy a walk on the beach.